

WMA
United States Department of State

Washington, D. C. 20520

JUL - 5 2002

RELEASED IN FULL

Dear Mr. Ballenger:

Thank you for your June 17 letter in which you requested our assistance in securing financing for a legislative conference for members of the Venezuelan National Assembly and the United States Congress. We are extremely interested in programs to ease the tension in Venezuela by promoting dialogue among the various parties and appreciate your desire to help strengthen the Venezuelan National Assembly in this manner.

We have shared your letter with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office for Transition Initiatives (OTI). Those offices are reviewing your proposal and are exploring funding sources and the legal authorities of OTI to fund such a conference. Our Mission to the OAS is consulting with that organization on ways it might be able to support these activities.

We thank you for your expression of interest in assisting the democratic process in Venezuela and will keep you and your office abreast of further developments. Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance in this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

Paul V. Kelly
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

The Honorable
Cass Ballenger,
House of Representatives.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
DATE/CASE ID: 23 JUN 2006 200503262

H2002 0619=002

UNCLASSIFIED

WHA



United States Department of State

Washington, D. C. 20520

JUL - 5 2002

Dear Mr. Delahunt:

Thank you for your June 17 letter in which you requested our assistance in securing financing for a legislative conference for members of the Venezuelan National Assembly and the United States Congress. We are extremely interested in programs to ease the tension in Venezuela by promoting dialogue among the various parties and appreciate your desire to help strengthen the Venezuelan National Assembly in this manner.

We have shared your letter with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office for Transition Initiatives (OTI). Those offices are reviewing your proposal and are exploring funding sources and the legal authorities of OTI to fund such a conference. Our Mission to the OAS is consulting with that organization on ways it might be able to support these activities.

We thank you for your expression of interest in assisting the democratic process in Venezuela and will keep you and your office abreast of further developments. Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance in this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul V. Kelly".

Paul V. Kelly
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

The Honorable
William D. Delahunt,
House of Representatives.

UNCLASSIFIED

H 2002 0619:002

UNCLASSIFIED



WHLA
United States Department of State

Washington, D. C. 20520

JUL - 5 2002

Dear Mr. Meeks:

Thank you for your June 17 letter in which you requested our assistance in securing financing for a legislative conference for members of the Venezuelan National Assembly and the United States Congress. We are extremely interested in programs to ease the tension in Venezuela by promoting dialogue among the various parties and appreciate your desire to help strengthen the Venezuelan National Assembly in this manner.

We have shared your letter with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office for Transition Initiatives (OTI). Those offices are reviewing your proposal and are exploring funding sources and the legal authorities of OTI to fund such a conference. Our Mission to the OAS is consulting with that organization on ways it might be able to support these activities.

We thank you for your expression of interest in assisting the democratic process in Venezuela and will keep you and your office abreast of further developments. Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance in this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul V. Kelly".

Paul V. Kelly
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

The Honorable
Gregory Meeks,
House of Representatives.

UNCLASSIFIED

H 20020619-002

UNCLASSIFIED

2

Drafted by: WHA/AND: Tim Hanway x72807
F:\SEARAAND\Andregion 02\Letters\Leg Conf - Venez.doc
06-20-02

Cleared: WHA: TShannon OK
WHA: WMiele OK *Jan*
WHA/AND: PChicola OK
WHA/AND: BNaranjo OK
H: JHagan OK
P: MHammer OK
S/P: MZarin OK
D: ABarry OK
AID/OTI: CGarrett OK
WHA/USAOS: BFriedman/CFuller OK

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED
CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE
CLEARANCE



H2002 0619=002

Initial for clearance or return for edits with remarks. Do not mark on original document. Pass on in numerical order with final stop in H/CCU.
PLEASE, DO NOT return to drafting office without sending to or notifying CCU first.

Name: Ballenger/Delahunt/Meeks Date: 07/01/02 11:00 am

Subject: Regarding assistance in securing financing for a legislative conference for members of the Venezuelan national Assembly and United States Congress

1. HStaff - Log In 7/1

2. Hagan *JH*

3. Sharp Smith *7/2 11:50*

4. Deere *7/2 4:45*

5. Raether *OK - 7/3/02 - 5:30 p.m.*

6. Terry *DS*

7. MPolt

8. PKelly *PK*

9. HStaff - Log Out
Return to CCU, 7330

COMMENTS: H/CCU:KNWeathers

*staff acc'ts
- put in suspense
file*

7/11/02

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE CONGRESSIONAL
CORRESPONDENCE TASKER



CONTROL# **H2002** 0619=002 ACTION BUREAU: WNA

DATE: JUN 19 2002

IPS:

☒ SUBSTANTIVE ☐ CONSTITUENT

☒ IMAGE ENTIRE DOCUMENT ☐ IMAGE ONLY FIRST ☐ PAGES

BUREAU:

BUREAU ACTION REQUESTED: RESPOND TO CCU 2 DAYS FROM: JUN 19 2002

☒ REPLY FOR SIGNATURE BY PAUL V. KELLY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY,
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

☐ ADDRESS ENVELOPE TO DISTRICT OFFICE

☐ DIRECT REPLY TO CONSTITUENT BY OFFICE DIRECTOR WITH COPY TO
CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE. PHONE 7-1608 WHEN COMPLETED

☐ FYI ONLY/NO RESPONSE NECESSARY/PHONE 7-1608 WHEN RECEIVED

☐ REPLY FOR SIGNATURE DIRECTLY BY BUREAU

☐ OTHER ACTION: _____

JUN 21 *Reminder*

DUE DATE: JUN 21 2002

****BUREAUS MUST MAKE TRANSFERS OF ACTION DIRECTLY WITH RECEIVING BUREAU'S
FRONT OFFICE. The CCU has a listing of contacts. PLEASE NOTIFY CCU 7-1608 OF ALL
TRANSFERS OF ACTION****

UNCLASSIFIED

m

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2002

The Honorable Colin Powell
Secretary of State
US Department of State
Washington, DC

RECEIVED
2002 JUN 18 PM 12:49
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Dear Secretary Powell:

As you know, we have been closely following the situation in Venezuela for some time. Several of us visited Caracas in the aftermath of the coup attempt against President Hugo Chavez and his return to office, and we have actively supported and participated in efforts to ease political tensions in Venezuela.

Despite moves to promote reconciliation, however, it is clear to us that the situation remains tense and could erupt into violence at any time. This would have terrible consequences for both Venezuela and the United States. The US must do all it can to prevent further disruptions, and we would like to suggest a practical, constructive way for such an effort to start.

As you know, in recent years, Venezuela's traditional political parties have been largely discredited, and after the election of President Chavez, they all but disappeared. This created a vacuum in which there was no coherent political opposition -- an essential factor for healthy debate and constructive development of policy. The past year has seen the emergence of an opposition, but its energies must be channeled into political action, not violence and extraconstitutional activity.

We believe the best arena for such political action is the Venezuelan National Assembly. Focusing on the Assembly would enable the opposition to participate in national debate in a constitutional, democratic fashion. And because members of the Assembly are freely elected, the legitimacy of opposition representatives could not be challenged.

We have met with a number of our legislative counterparts in the Assembly, from both the governing party and the opposition. During our discussions, we proposed holding a legislative conference between the Venezuelan National Assembly and the Congress of the United States.

This conference could nurture the Venezuelan National Assembly as an institution by providing legislators from all parties the opportunity to work together in a collegial fashion on a particular topic. Such an effort could help them more fully appreciate the need for consensus and compromise, and could encourage a better understanding of the role of a legislative body in a healthy democracy.

UNCLASSIFIED

The conference would also provide US legislators with the opportunity to more fully understand Venezuela's challenges and complexities, as well as the myriad opportunities for US investment in that country. This could promote an easing of tensions and a more cooperative relationship between the United States and Venezuela, which would benefit both nations immensely.

The nucleus of such a legislative exchange could be the already-established Venezuela Caucus in the US Congress and the US-Venezuela Friendship Group in the Venezuelan National Assembly.

The initial response of the Venezuelan legislators to this suggestion has been enthusiastic and overwhelming. They recognize that such a conference could play a key role in strengthening Venezuela's democracy and institutions and in improving relations between our nations.

Although there appears to be political support for this project, there is still the practical matter of funding it. Given the limitations under which the US Congress operates - funding for the Mexico and Canada interparliamentary conferences, for example, are subject to annual appropriation, a cumbersome process when time is a critical factor, as in this case - we would welcome your suggestions. In particular, we believe the Organization of American States or the United Nations could be encouraged to support this conference. We are also exploring the possibility of appropriate, complementary private support for this effort.

This initiative presents a rare opportunity for the US to play a proactive role in defusing the volatile situation in Venezuela. We are convinced that President Chavez himself would welcome this effort.

We look forward to hearing your suggestions, and stand ready to discuss this with you further should you feel it necessary.

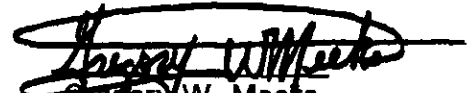
Sincerely,



Cass Ballenger
Member of Congress



William D. Delahunt
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT

1317 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

202/225-3111

FAX. 202/225-5658

Date: June 17, 2002
To: The Honorable Colin Powell, US Secretary of State
From: Congressmen Ballenger, Delahunt & Meeks
Pages: 3, including this cover sheet.
Comments: Please see attached.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Weathers, Kamala N

From: Weathers, Kamala N
Sent: Friday, June 21, 2002 11:06 AM
To: TTL-WHA; Hagan, James G
Cc: Weathers, Kamala N
Subject: H20020619=002 Would welcome Department of State suggestions on a proposed legislative conference between the Venezuelan National Assembly and the Congress of the United States.

Importance: High

REMINDER

The Secretary of State requires that all Substantive Congressional Correspondence (Yellow Borders) be responded to within **2 work days**. The attached Substantive Correspondence is **due** in the Congressional Correspondence Unit (CCU) on the date indicated on the tasker.

DATE DUE: 06/21/02



H20020619=002

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Weathers, Kamala N

From: Fellows, Naomi C
Sent: Friday, June 21, 2002 11:07 AM
To: Weathers, Kamala N(H)
Cc: WHA-STAFFERS
Subject: RE: H20020619=002 Would welcome Department of State suggestions on a proposed legislative conference between the Venezuelan National Assembly and the Congress of the United States.

We are expecting it this afternoon

Naomi C. Fellows
WHA Staff Assistant
202/647-8564
fellowsnc@state.sgov.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Weathers, Kamala N
Sent: Friday, June 21, 2002 11:06 AM
To: TTL-WHA; Hagan, James G
Cc: Weathers, Kamala N
Subject: H20020619=002 Would welcome Department of State suggestions on a proposed legislative conference between the Venezuelan National Assembly and the Congress of the United States.

Importance: High

REMINDER

The Secretary of State requires that all Substantive Congressional Correspondence (Yellow Borders) be responded to within **2 work days**. The attached Substantive Correspondence is **due** in the Congressional Correspondence Unit (CCU) on the date indicated on the tasker.

DATE DUE: 06/21/02

<< File: H20020619=002 >>

UNCLASSIFIED